The father of the girl says: Let me ask the women of the house for I cannot compel them if they do not agree. And if the reply comes back that the women of the house agree, the sheikh says: How much do you ask of us? And the man replies: Give according to your pleasure. The sheikh says: No, you must name the sum. And the man says: One hundred dinars. 584

The next day the father of the youth, or if he has no father, one of his male relatives, takes the hundred dinars and he goes to the father of the girl and he gives him the hundred dinars. And when the father of the youth has gone, the father of the girl gives the money to the mother of the girl, and the mother goes out and buys a gold necklace, gold earrings, gold bangles and silver anklets for the girl, also clothes and shoes. 585 ● 201

Then between three and ten days after the payment of the money, at the time of sunset, the bridegroom sits in his house to await his bride, and he sends all his female relatives to bring her to him. His mother and his grandmother and his sisters and his aunts march in procession with a band to the house of the bride, and they are escorted by all the friends of the bridegroom belonging to the tribe, armed with their revolvers and rifles, and there should be fifty armed men in the procession for a fashionable wedding. 585

When the procession reaches the house of the bride the men fire their rifles, and the bride, who is ready, comes out, accompanied by her female relations, and her male relations sit quietly in their house and they do not come out. Then the bride goes back in procession to the house of the groom, surrounded by the female relations of the groom.

When the procession reaches the bridegroom's house

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So-and-so, and do you consent to the consummation? The 585
bride replies: I consent.

Then the moumin returns to the groom, and he says: O husband, congratulations on your marriage. Then he asks: O my boy, do you consent to this bride and her age is eighteen years? And the groom says: I consent. Then the moumin asks: Do you consent to the consummation? And the groom says: I consent. When the moumin has finished with the groom, the groom rises, and accompanied by his two 'wazirs', his father, brother, and close friends he enters the house. Those that rise with the groom say: Blessed be the Prophet of God.

The groom thus escorted walks to the door of the women's room and he enters. The men who have escorted him turn back at the door and return to the guests. The groom sits down with the bride and her relatives. Then, one by one, the relatives get up and bid the bride good night, and they go out to another room, leaving only the bride and the groom sitting there. Then the groom goes over to the bride and very slowly he raises her veil and takes it off her face; he then looks at her face for a minute or so, and gives her one kiss on the brow.

Then the mother and sisters of the groom come in and serve the wedding feast to the bride and groom, who eat it alone in their room. After they have eaten they drink coffee. Then the groom takes the hand of the bride and he leads her into the bedroom. Then he takes off the cloak of the bride and he lays it on the floor and he prays on it.

The guests are served with dinner at the same time as the bride and groom, and when they have finished eating they amuse themselves with music, watching the dancing, and firing their rifles until about 3 a.m.

In the morning the groom sits in his guest room, and

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585 he receives congratulations from all his friends. For three days he stays in his house. Then after three days he goes and calls on the father of the bride. The bride may not go near her house until the thirtieth day after the marriage, when she goes to call on her father.

The male relatives of the bride are, of course, not present at the wedding feast, nor do they go to congratulate the groom on the morning after. They may, however, go and call on the groom ten days after the marriage, but they do not congratulate him. They are supposed to be sad at losing their daughter or sister as the case may be.

In the above account I have tried to give the details of what actually happens in a tribal marriage, rather than the theory of what should happen. The above refers to a tribesman who owns a small piece of land and who works in addition as a farm labourer. He owns a small house. A wedding for a sheikh or sirkal would be much more elaborate than this, and would include a reading from the Holy Quran. The customs of townspeople are also quite different. There appears to be only one point of resemblance and that is that the money expended is out of proportion to the means of the bridegroom, but he may only get married once in his life and the feast and entertainment will be talked about for a long time, and there is no doubt that the guests enjoy themselves far more than the guests, say, at an English wedding.